

A BRIEF
APOLOGY
IN
Behalf of the PEOPLE
In ~~Devotion~~ Call'd
QUAKERS.

WRITTEN
For the Information of our Sober and
Well-inclin'd Neighbours in and about the
Town of *Warminster* in the County of *Wilts.*

B Y
W. Chandler, A. Pyott, J. Hodges,
and some others.

*By honour and dishonour, by evil report and
good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as
unknown, and yet well known; as dying,
and behold we live; 2 Cor. 6. 8, 9.*

L O N D O N,
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A Brief Apology, &c.

IT is not that we love Contention, or desire Controversie, or are impatient in bearing Reproaches, that we appear thus publick: But such have been the repeated high Charges, and smart Lashes, that our Adversaries (more especially some of the *Presbyterian* Assembly) have of late taken a liberty, liberally and lavishly, to bestow upon us; that we find ourselves concern'd to Clear and Vindicate the Truth and Innocency of our Christian Profession, from those black Aspersions, that have render'd it so frightful and formidable, as though 'twere only a meer Complication of pestilent Errors; as well as to satisfy the Minds of such of our piously inclined Neighbours, as may be desirous to hear us speak

for our selves; as also for the Information of those, who may have been imposed upon, by that dress wherein our Opposers have represented us. And although these can Object nothing material against us now, that hath not been long since, over and over, offer'd by some of the same Perswasion, and have as often received Answers from some or other of our Friends; (some of which have never yet been by them Replied unto) yet forasmuch as those may not have come to the view of many of our Neighbours, for whom this is chiefly intended, we thought it fit briefly to say so much as we think may be accommodate to the present occasion; and which perhaps, with unprejudiced Minds, may bespeak our Creed not so unsound and erroneous, as our somewhat different deportment hath render'd us obnoxious and contemptible, as well as distasteful, to those who either ambitiously affect Honour and Respect, and love Greetings, or think a Complaisant Compliance to the Fashions, Customs, and Complementments

Esth. 3. 5.
John 5.
44.
Mat. 23.
10.

ments of the Age, to be one of the chiefest Felicities of this Life, and best Expression of their Civility and good Manners.

We therefore desire our Well-disposed Neighbours, candidly to weigh what we have to alledge against the Clamours of those, who to be sure will not set us out to our best advantage; and to receive an Account from our selves, what we are, and what we believe and hold for Christian Truths; who certainly must needs know better our own Belief, than those who perhaps never examined, to any other end than to find fault, if ever they did it: And also, that we express not our Belief, in some particulars, in the affected Terms of other Professors of Christianity; but think it more reasonable and safe to content our selves with that Dress of Language, in which the Holy Ghost thought fit to hand them to us in the Holy Scriptures: Those most Excellent and Divine Writings, which above all others in the World, challenge our Reverence and most

diligent Reading; those Oracles of God, and Rich Christian Treasury of divine saving Truths, which were written for our Learning, that we through patience and comfort of them may have Hope; and are profitable for Doctrine, Reproof, Correction, and in Instruction in Righteousness, to the perfecting, and thoroughly furnishing of the Man of GOD to every good Work; making him wise unto Salvation, through Faith which is in Christ Jesus; containing all Christian Doctrines necessary to be believed for Salvation, and are a sufficient External Standard and Touchstone to try the Doctrines of Men; and we say with the Apostle, Gal. 1. 8. Whosoever shall publish and propagate any other Gospel and Faith, than is therein testified of to us, by those Inspired Pen-men who were the first Promulgators thereof, though he were an Angel, let him be accursed: All which, and whatsoever is therein contained, we as firmly believe as any of you do; and as 'tis the Duty of every sincere Christian, we are heartily Thankful to

Rom. 15.

4.

2 Tim. 3.

15, 16,

17.

Gal. 1. 8.

to God for them, who through his good Providence hath preserved them to our Time, to our great Benefit and Comfort.

We Believe in that Great Omnipotent God, that made and created all things, and gave us our Being, whom in Sincerity of Heart we fear, reverence and worship, being seriously concern'd for our Souls welfare to Eternity. We believe that Great Mystery, that there are Three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and that these Three are One in Being and Substance: And, as do ye, so do we also hope for and expect Salvation, only and alone through the Son of God, our blessed Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST of *Nazareth*; believing that God the Father hath ordained him for Salvation to the ends of the Earth; and that no other Name is given under Heaven, by which Men shall be saved; who being Conceived by the Holy Ghost, in the Womb of the Virgin *Mary*, was born of her at *Bethlehem*; as also his Holy and Exemplary Life, perfectly

1 Joh. 5.
7.

Isai. 49. 6
Acts 13.
47.

Ch. 4. 12.

2 Pet. 2.
21, 22.

Heb. 4. 15. feſtly free from Sin; his Doctrine,
 Miracles, Sufferings, and Death up-
 on the Croſs, without the Gates of
Jeruſalem; his Reſurrection from
 the Dead, and Aſcenſion into Hea-
 ven, where he is at the Right Hand
 Rom. 8. 34. of God the Father, perfect GOD
 1 Tim. 2. 5. 6. and perfect Man, and the alone Me-
 1 John 2. 12. diator between GOD and Man;
 and is our Advocate with the Fa-
 ther, and ever liveth to make Inter-
 ceſſion for us; and alſo ſhall judge
 Acts 10. 42. both Quick and Dead: All which,
 and whatſoever elſe is recorded of
 him in the Sacred Scriptures, we
 firmly believe.

This Jeſus, in whom dwelt the
 Col. 2. 9. Fulneſs of the Godhead, we believe,
 offer'd up himſelf, according to the
 Eph. 5. 2. Will of the Father, an acceptable
 1 John 2. 2. Sacrifice to God, and became a Pro-
 Heb. 10. 12. pitiation for the Sins of Mankind,
 to the end of the *World*, and died for
 Rom. 5. 12, 18. all Men, as all died in *Adam*; thro'
 whoſe Blood God proclaims Re-
 demption and Salvation to Man,
 2 Cor. 5. 19. and offers to be reconciled, and
 Rom. 3. 25. freely for his Sons ſake to remit,
 forgive, and paſs by all Offences,
 to

to as many as shall truly and heartily
repent of their Sins, and turn from
the same; and shall so believe in our
Lord Jesus Christ, and love him, as
for the future to live a holy, cir-
cumspect, Christian Life, and obey
his Commands, thereby continuing
in his love.

Which Holy Life, so much Cele-
brated and strictly kept to in the
Primitive Ages of Christianity, (that
whosoever named the Name, or took
the Name of Christ upon them, were
to depart from Iniquity) we believe,
ought to be inseparable from a true
and faithful Christian, as ever ac-
companying a true living and active
Faith; and it seems was thought no
less necessary, by those that Com-
posed the Promise, that should be
made in behalf of Infants, before
they were admitted into that once
Sacred Catalogue, (to wit) *That as
they came to Years of Discretion, they
should forsake the Devil, and all his
Works, the Poms and Vanities of this
wicked World, and all the sinful Lusts
of the Flesh, and keep God's holy Will
and Commandments, and walk in the
same*

Luke 22.

47.

Acts 10.

43. and

26. 26.

Eph. 4.

22, 23,

24.

Rom. 8.

3, 4.

2 Cor. 5.

15, 17.

Tit. 2. 14

John 14.

15, 21,

23, 24.

& 15. 10.

2 Tim. 2.

19.

1 Pet. 4.

1, 2, 3.

James 2.

12, to

the end.

Tit. 2.

11, 12,

Luke 1.

75.

same all the Days of their Lives : This we believe to be the bounden Duty of Mankind. And though our Opposers have scoff'd us, and branded us with Error for holding *Perfection*, because (in pleading for a Holy Righteous Life, as that which is well-pleasing to God, and avouching his Power to be stronger in Man, as Man believes and cleaves to it, to rescue him from under the Power of Satan, than is that of the Devil to retain him in Thralldom) we have sometimes made use of the Words of Christ and his Apostles, as, *Be you perfect, as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect* : *He that hath this Hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure*, &c. Yet have we never pretended to a Moral Perfection, beyond what is contained in the above Promise, which is sound and true in it self, and is that which God requires of us ; and therefore 'tis that we frequently press its Necessity, and fervently exhort People to its Performance. Neither do we expect to be exempt from Temptations, while we inhabit these frail

Taber-

Rom. 6.
18, 19.
22.

2 Cor. 7.
1.

Eph. 4.
24.

1 Thes. 3.
13. and

4. 7.
Heb. 12.
10, 14.

1 John 4.
4.

Mat. 5.
48.

Col. 4. 12

1 John 3.
3.

Heb. 4.
15.

Tabernacles, which is no Sin, provided we consent not: Christ himself was likewise Tempted, yet he Sinn'd not. For tho' both Good and Evil is presented to our Thoughts, yet we appropriate neither, but as we entertain and embrace it: So that tho' the number of Thoughts may sometimes press us, and the nature of some grieve us; yet they don't otherwise affect us, or is Sin thereby conceived, if our Wills don't close with, and joyn to them, by consenting; but if we consent, we are culpable in the sight of God, though it proceed not to an open Immorality. And as we can't prevent the forming of some Thoughts, so we can't wholly avoid the presentation of some Evil ones, while our common Enemy is busie with his Baits; but yet the more we resist, and the more the Lusts and Affections of the Flesh (which is the part that entertains them) is mortified, the more their Habit is weakened, their Assaults feebler, and we the less infested by them.

And

And notwithstanding we have hence been falsely accused, that we expect to be saved by our own Works, as being Meritorious; yet we don't acknowledge a Holy Life, as the efficient and procuring Cause of our Salvation; which we, no less than you, totally refer to the Free Grace and Mercy of God in Christ, without any Merit in Man; but we esteem it as a constant Companion thereto, and a necessary Condition on our part, in compliance with God's Gracious Offer, without which we may not obtain it, being inseparably annext to that Faith, which only pleaseth God, and is but our reasonable Duty.

Eph. 2. 8.

James 2. 18, to the end.

Heb. 11. 6.

Rom. 12. 1, 2.

Heb. 2. 9. & 10. 12.

Acts 3. 19.

And we believe, that although Christ thus offer'd up himself once for all, for the Sins of all Men, to the end of the World; thereby rendering Repentance and Amendment of Life prevalent with God; yet that the Traditional Belief of that alone is not sufficient to entitle us to that common Salvation that comes by him; but that 'tis of necessity we truly Repent, and be Converted from

from the Evil to the Good ; and therefore 'tis no less necessary for us now, than 'twas for Believers in the Apostles Days, that we be turned from Darkness to Light ; or in other terms, from the dark Power of Satan, to the Power of God, who is Light, that thereby we may every one know the Work of Redemption and Salvation, wrought in and for our selves : For 'tis not enough to believe that Christ died, if we feel not the blessed Effects of his Death, who came to save us from our Sins, and bless us by turning us from our Iniquities, and gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purifie unto himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works.

Acts 26.
18, 20.

Mat. 7.

21.

Acts 3.

26.

Tit. 2. 14

For we believe such to be the natural State of Man in the Fall, that by Nature we are dead as to God, at a distance from him, prone to Evil, and to gratifie the Desires of our Sensual Mind, sway'd by the corrupt and sinful Lusts of the Flesh, and under the power of a strange King, rul'd by the Prince of the Power

Gen. 2.

17.

Rom. 5.

12.

2 Cor. 5.

14.

Gen. 6. 5.

Rom. 7. 5

Eph. 2. 2 .

2 Tim. 2.

26.

Power of the Air; so that our inward Man being thus Dead from God, we cannot exercise our Spiritual Senses towards him; nor can
 1 Cor. 2. this natural Man perceive, know,
 14. or favour the things of God, which only are Spiritually Discerned: Wherefore, notwithstanding our Saviour died for us, we are yet by Nature in a miserable undone Condition, in Captivity to our Souls Enemy, except we know the Second
 1 Cor. 15. Adam, the Lord from Heaven, that
 45, 47. Quickning Spirit, to quicken our
 Eph. 2. Souls, and make us alive to God
 1, 5. again; that being restored to the
 Col. 2. 13 use of our inward Senses, we may,
 Rom. 8. by the assistance of his Divine Light,
 11. (wherewith for that end he hath
 Eph. 5. bless'd all the Sons and Daughters
 13, 14. of Men) see our selves in this sad
 John 1. 9 and lost State, under the Wrath of
 Eph. 2. 3. God, and abhor our selves therefore;
 and 5. 6. and under this living Sense (where-
 in things will appear with another
 aspect than before) cry to God for
 Deliverance therefrom, with such an
 inward hearty Sorrow, as works a
 2 Cor. 7. true Repentance for the same. 'Tis
 10. not

not our being sprinkled, when In-
 fants, that will make us true Chri-
 stians, convert us from being Chil-
 dren of Wrath, to become Children *John 1.*
 of Grace, and Sons of God, and *12, 13.*
 Members of Christ's Church, and *Rom. 8.*
 invest us in an Interest in him; *14.*
 'tis not learning our Catechism, and
 subscribing to certain Articles of
 Faith, though never so Orthodox,
 and being educated in a Historical
 Belief of what Christ did for us
 above Sixteen Hundred Years ago;
 'tis not this only that will admini-
 ster a sufficient, true, and saving
 Knowledge of Christ, and really in-
 terest us in his Death and Sufferings:
 All which People may please them-
 selves withal, and yet continue as
 fast bound under the Dominion of
 Satan (who still rules where dis-
 obedience is) as those less perfect
 in that Lesson. But the true and
 saving Knowledge of Christ, is to
 know our selves turn'd from Dark-
 ness to Light, from the Power of *Acts 26.*
 Satan to the Power of God, that *18.*
 by it we may be delivered from the *Col. 1. 13*
 Power of Darkeness, and be tran-
 slated

flated into the Kingdom of his dear
 Son; to know his saving Power
John 8. really to rescue and redeem us from
 32, 36. under the power of him that hath
 enthrall'd us, and leads Captive at
 his Will, those who live in the Va-
 nity of their Minds; to know him
Mat. 3. bind this strong Man, to spoil his
 27. Goods, and dispossess and cast him
 out; to know Christ to sit in the
Mal. 3. Soul as a Refiner, to burn up, con-
 2, 3. sume and destroy, to purifie and
Luke 3. throughly to purge out whatso-
 16, 17. ever is contrary to him; to wash
Rom. 15. us, and make us clean, that we may
 16. have right to a part in him; that
John 13. being cleansed and sanctified, he
 8. may take up his abode with us, ex-
1 Thes. 5. exercising his Kingly Power, and work-
 25. ing in us both to will and to do of
1 Cor. 12 his good pleasure. The Mind being
John 14. thus dis-intangled, and having cast
 23. off its former Yoke, the old things
Heb. 13. being done away, all things now be-
 21. come new; a new tender Heart of
 2 Cor. 5. Flesh, according to the Promise,
 17. new Thoughts, Desires, Inclinations,
Ezek. 36. Affections, Words, and Actions; this
 26. new Inside producing a new Outside
 also,

also, even throughout a new Creature; now in Christ indeed, and really entituled to those Benefits that accrue to Men through him: That living Faith, that pleaseth God, and gives Victory, and is ever fruitful to him in good Works, being begotten, and this work of Redemption and Regeneration thus wrought in the Soul, by Jesus Christ; together with that most precious Sacrifice he offer'd up, when his precious Blood was shed upon the Cross for us, we believe, compleats the Salvation of every Soul that is thus awakened, and made alive, and set free, by the Power and Spirit of him that is the Way, the Truth, and the Life of every Soul that truly lives to God; to walk in that Holy Way of Life, Truth and Peace, that was prepared of old for the Ransomed and Redeemed to walk in.

And we believe, that he graciously waits, with exceeding great kindness and long suffering, that Men may Repent; knocking at the Door of every Man's Heart, freely offering, but not imposing his Assistance to this most concerning work and change in

B. the

James 2.
18, to
the end.
Heb. 12.
2.

Rom. 6.
11, 13.

John 8.
36.

1st. 35.
8, 9.

Rev. 3. 20.
Mat. 23.
37.

the Minds of Men: So that in the day wherein God will judge the World by Jesus Christ, and every secret thing will be made manifest, God will be justified, and clear of the Blood of all Men; and every Mouth will be stopped, and every Man's Condemnation will be of himself; for having rejected the Day of his Visitation, (wherein God calls to Man) and offers to be reconciled to him; for resisting the Strivings, and slighting the Reproofs of his Spirit, which in matchless Mercy he hath given Man to instruct him, and shew and lead him in the way of Life and Peace.

Neh. 9.
20.

We believe, that tho' the pravity of Man's Nature in the Fall is such, that the Natural or Carnal Man, that is enmity against God, in the state of meer Nature, minds only the things of the Flesh, and naturally brings forth the Works thereof, and cannot please God, nor keep and observe his Laws, but is prone to evil; Yet that those who embrace the Visitation of God, and are really regenerated, and Born again of Incorruptible Seed; by the Word of God, that lives and abides

Rom. 8.
5, 7, 8.

1 Pet. 1.
23.
Heb. 4.
12.

abides for ever, that Ingrafted Word James 1.
 that is quick and powerful, and able 21.
 to save and sanctifie the Soul; are John 17.
 born into a new Life, and invested 17, 19.
 with another and higher Power, and
 becomes Spiritually-minded, and by Ch. 3. 6.
 the Spirit are set at liberty to walk
 after the Spirit, and bring forth its
 fruits, and receive ability from the
 Spirit to serve God acceptably; be-
 ing now led by the Spirit of God, and Rom. 8.
 become his Children, taught of him, 14, 15.
 and through the Spirit of Adoption
 receiv'd into their Hearts, have right
 to call God *Father*, and Jesus *Lord*: 1 Cor. 12.
 For having through the Spirit mortifi- 3
 cied the *Old Man*, or *first Nature*, with Rom. 8.
 his corrupt and depraved Inclina- 13. and
 tions, and evil Deeds, and put him 6. 6.
 off, having crucified the Flesh, with Eph. 4.
 the Affections and Lusts thereof, they 22, 23,
 put on the *New and Heavenly Man*, 24.
 which after God is created in Righ- Gal. 5. 24
 teousness and true Holiness; and be- Col. 3. 9.
 ing renewed in the Spirit of their 10.
 Minds, they now walk in Newness Rom. 6. 4
 of Life, and are really in Christ; and 7. 6.
 and therefore are changed, and be-
 come new Creatures; and now think

and act under the conduct of a Principle superiour to that which formerly govern'd them, having their Minds raised to a Region above that of fallen Nature; so that now the stream of their Thoughts, Desires and Actions runs in another Current, and the bent of their Affections are after those things that are above, where Christ is; that Eye being now open'd that sees a more transcendent Beauty and Desireableness in the Invisible and Durable Treasures of him, than all the transient Felicities that this World can afford.

Col. 3.
1, 2.

And we believe, that whosoever expects the blessed Imputation of Christ's Righteousness, ought thus to put on the Lord Jesus, and to be thus cloathed upon, and covered with his Righteousness, and in measure have his Holy Life brought forth in and through them, and know him to enliven and influence their Minds, and to work in and for them; and that *without him they can do nothing*; but through him that strengthens them, they can do whatsoever he commands them; that as they abide living

Rom. 13.
14.

Isai. 26.

12

Phil. 2.

13 and

4. 13.

Joh. 15. 5

living Branches in him, through that *John 15.*
 Sap and Vertue they daily receive *5, 8.*
 from him, they are made able to
 bring forth Fruits well-pleasing to
 God, whereby he is glorified. For
 tho' God the Father accepts us in
 Christ, and for his sake; yet is the
 New-Birth the indispensable Quali-
 fication, and true distinguishing Mark
 of those that are really in him: *He* *2 Cor. 5.*
that is in Christ, is a new Creature; old *17.*
things are past away, behold all things are *Gal. 6. 15*
become new. *John* says, *He that saith* *2.*
he abideth in him, ought himself also so *6. & 39.*
to walk, even as he walked. *7, 8, 9.* We ascribe
 nothing to Man, as having any pow-
 er or ability in or of himself to please
 God, but attribute all Power to do
 that which is good to Christ alone, in
 whom only the Father is well-pleased. *John 15.*
 'Tis through him that Men so love *4, 5.*
 and fear God, as to eschew Evil, and
 work that Righteousness which is ac- *Acts 10.*
 ceptable to him; upon whom there- *34, 35.*
 fore Man's dependance ought to be
 daily, to receive from him such suit-
 able supplies, as through a constant
 watchfulness may enable them so to
 walk, as to continue in his Favour,
 and

and enjoy his Smiles. For 'tis not, as too many seem either to imagine, or would gladly have it to be, that they may live in Sin and Disobedience here, and indulge their corrupt Inclinations; and yet hereafter have Christ's Righteousness imputed to them. For tho' we are not under the *Mosaical Law*, so as to be obliged to its Ordinances, divers Washings, and Levitical Priesthood, Christ our High Priest having offer'd up himself once for all, and abolish'd it; yet are we not so under *Grace*, as to be discharged from living well; tho' we are not tyed to its Rites and Ceremonies, yet are we obliged to fulfil its Righteousness, which Christ came not to destroy, but to establish. For tho' God be gracious and merciful to forgive us our Trespases, through the Meditation of Christ, upon our true and hearty Repentance, and turning from them; yet 'tis not that we should take a liberty to go on in Sin and Rebellion against him. We are not to Sin, because he is Gracious, that his Grace may abound: If so, Where is the straitness of

1 Pet. 4.
18.

Mat. 5.
20.

Rom. 3.
31. & 8.
3, 4.

Isai. 55. 7

Rom. 6.
1, 2.

of this way? If this be to take up a daily Cross to our own Wills, that we may perform his, Pray where is the liberty of the Flesh? Those that are Virtually in Christ, which renders them acceptable to the Father, and compleatly espoused to him, must needs have resigned their Wills, as an effect of true Love, and requisite to so strict an Union; opposite Wills being inconsistent therewith; whence Obedience necessarily follows. The Apostle *John*, after having signified, that *God is Light*, and that those that would know the Blood of Cleansing, and true Fellowship with him, and one another, ought to *walk in the Light, as he is in the Light*, tells the young and weak in the Faith, whom he calls *Children*, that he writ those things that they *should not sin*; but yet if any through weakness or inadvertency should sin, and so fall under the Father's Displeasure, he tells them, that Christ the Righteous is both a *Propitiation*, and also an *Advocate* that intercedes with the Father; and that their keeping his *Commands*, was the surest Evidence of their

1 John 1.
5, 7.

Chap. 2.
to ver. 6.

knowing and being in him: of the strong, whom therefore calls *Young Men*, he says, *That the Word of God abode in them, and that they had overcome the Evil One.*

*John 14.
21, 23.*

These things may soon be spoken and comprehended in the Understanding; but to experience them full'd in our selves, is our highest interest, and only can make us sharers in them. The essence of Christianity, and happiness of Christians, don't consist in having our Heads stuf't with knowledge, only to lodge there and feed upon; but to have our Hearts filled with divine love, which animates us to diligence, and inspires us with courage and vigor to observe and perform the Will of God; who looks not at what People profess only, or by what name they are call'd, but regards the Heart, and what Principle governs there: People may make a Profession of the best things; and yet continue alive to themselves; they may alter Opinion or Perswasion, and yet not turn from Darkness to Light, from the Power of Satan to God. There hath not been
wanting

wanting a very large and splendid Profession of Christianity, adorned with curious, elaborate and elevated Notions, polish'd with Rhetorick and Oratory; but that power and life that reaches the Heart, and gives victory and Dominion over it's lusts and affections, which war against the Soul, is that which too many are yet strangers to: When yet to know our lapsed Souls restored from their first fallen state in *Adam*, and raised to a station where we may both perceive the things of God, and receive power to work his Will; to know our Minds redeemed, and that power vanquish'd, which led us captive, and we leaven'd by the Heavenly Gift, into it's own nature; as 'tis the very Life and Marrow of that Religion, about whose exterior parts the world is filled with Noise; so 'tis the proper and most concerning-business of our lives, to find this great Salvation accomplish'd in us. The experimental working out whereof in the Heart, by the saving Grace and Spirit of God, that is given to Man to profit with, will yield more satisfac-

Gal. 6.
3, 4.

C

tion

tion and true contentment to that Soul, that sincerely seeks the Kingdom of Heaven, and the Righteousness thereof, in whom 'tis begun and carrying on, than to hear or read all their days of what God hath done through all Ages, for those that truly love and fear him; For want of which 'tis, that the profession of Christianity is generally so empty and barren in producing a real pious Life, attended with the Fruits of the Spirit, and a due Obedience proceeding from the Birth of the Spirit, without which the most refined Methods of Worship and Devotion will not recommend us to God, who is inaccessible *by the birth of the Flesh*. Nor do we believe that 'tis acceptable to God for People to sing before him those Songs and Psalms, that were the Experiences and spiritual Exercises of Holy Men in times past, without having some living Experience of the same things in themselves; or that People can properly and truly speak more, or farther of the things of God, than what they have known and experienced.

Where

Where, amongst all these sound Gospel-Scriptural-Truths, is lodg'd that latent Venom so much fear'd and talk'd of by our Adversaries, that is so dangerously contagious, and apt to infect the Minds of those that shall incline to converse with us, or our Books, touching our Belief in these necessary Points of Christianity? Which of them is it, that being imbibed, is more mortal and destructive to the Soul, and defiles it more than drinking a Draught of Poyson, or going to a Bawdy-house? Where are those damnable Opinions and Heresies wherewith you have been terrified? Which of them is it, that being persisted in, does necessarily lead to Damnation, and for which the * *Devil must needs carry us a pick-pack to Hell?* Is it in that we hold forth the infinite Love of God to Mankind, in not only freely of his meer Grace and Favour, providing a Sacrifice, through which an Atonement is made for the past Transgressions of Man, who was never at all in a capacity to make any for himself; which is applicable to every

As said
Thomas
Vincent.

* T. R.'s
unflavoury
and un-
charita-
ble Ex-
pression.

John. 3.

15, 16.

Acts 10.

43.

1 Cor. 12.

7.

John 14

16, 17,

26. and

16. 13.

Tit. 2. 11

12.

one who shall believe, repent and return; but hath also afforded to all the means of Faith, Repentance and Conversion; for God requires not impossibilities of Men, but expects they should improve those talents distributed to them; In not only sending forth the Son of his love to dye for their Sins, that they should no longer live therein; but also in sending forth his Light and Spirit of Truth into their Hearts, to lead and guide them into all Truth; and causing his Grace that brings Salvation, to appear to all Men, to instruct and teach them to deny all Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts, to forsake the the Devil and all his Works, the Poms and Vanities of this wicked World; to rescue and save them from living in the sinful Lusts of the Flesh, and help and strengthen them to return to their Obedience, and live a Sober, Righteous and Godly Life; to keep God's Holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the days of their Lives.

Which Gift from God to Man, the Holy Scriptures plentifully testify to,

to, under various denominations, as Spirit, Light, word, Grace, Seed; Leaven, Anointing, &c. By all which, we understand that Spirit or Heavenly Talent, with which God hath endowed Mankind in some degree or other, that he may profit with it; in the improvement whereof, by a diligent Co-working therewith, to the answering those holy ends for which we receive it, we doubt not but to be happy in rendering a good account of our Stewardship, and entring finally into the Joy of our Lord. Our Opposers themselves also pretend to the Spirit and Grace of God, or else what means their Praying for it's Assistance, and those plausible fine-spun Discourses of it, wherewith they sometimes entertain their Auditory? We Charitably hope 'tis more real, than only to beautify and recommend them to the Hearers, as what they cannot well avoid, for that the Scriptures are so full of that Language; and if indeed it be real, why is that a Fault and Error in us, which is so sound and ornamental in them? And

Mat. 25.

14, 15.

we think it very strange that they should apprehend any incongruity in granting this Divine Principle to be a Divine Light to the Mind; since its proper Office is to teach and instruct, to manifest and point to us our Duty, as well as to dispose and enable us to perform it; and ought to be our Leader and Governour. If the Godly Admonitions, and Exemplary Lives of Good Men, were rightly called Lights to the World, surely much more properly may this, whose Fountain is Light, (and does more nearly illuminate and inform the Understanding, and renders those effectual,) justly challenge that necessary and acceptable appellation.

If then the Grace and Spirit of God be in the Hearts of Men, surely 'tis not wholly unactive there, but will be making some Attempts towards accomplishing the end for which 'tis placed there; 'twill be at times attacking the Enemy, and endeavouring to supplant its contrary, for being holy and pure in its Nature, it's never reconcileable to Sin and Evil, but ever strives against it and may,

Tit. 2. 11,
12.
John 14.
17, 26.
& 16, 7.
8, 13, 14.
John 2.
27.

may, as Men regard it, be infallibly known by the nature of its Efforts. And we dare appeal even to all Mankind, whether they find not something placed in their Minds and Consciences, which tho' perhaps not regent there, yet never mingles with, nor consents to their evil Deeds, but always remains undefiled, and testifies against them, and convicts, reproves, and condemns them for it; and also oft-times in the cooler temper of their Spirits, manifests their States to them, and as 'twere reasons with them, discovering the Evil of their ways, secretly calling to them to come out of it; begetting Desires and Inclinations, sometimes to seek after God, and to make their Peace with him. Now since Man in his meer natural State, is totally Dead, and fallen from God, that he cannot as of himself think a good Thought; and that God only is essentially good, and as that which is truly so, must needs proceed from him: This Principle in us, that ever convicts us for Vice and Evil, whether in Thought, Word, or Deed, and disposeth us to

John 3.
20.
Eph. 5.
13.

John 16.
8, 13.

Prov. 14.
13.

consider of our latter end, and oft makes Men Sigh in the midst of Laughter, reminding them, that for those things they must give an Account; that draws us Heaven-ward, and inclines us to Vertue and Goodness, to do to all Men as we would be done unto; to be Just, Sober, Merciful, Temperate, &c. must needs be something that is not of us, but is pure and immaculate, and of a divine Nature; ever *aspiring*, and raising the Mind towards its Original.

Job 21.
17.
Psal. 18.
28.

Whence it cannot be a *Natural Light*, or meer *Light of Nature*, as very many would have it, who yet talk of the Spirit of God being in Man; for 'tis an undoubted Truth, that no Agent can act beyond its own sphere, and raise its Object to a state more Noble than it self, nor produce Effects of a Nature more sublime than its own Original. Besides, 'tis very clear and evident from *Scripture*, that the Mind of Man is oft lighted, by a Light superiour to that of meer Reason; and that Man by the utmost power and extent of Humane Reason and Speculation, (tho' he may arrive

arrive to an implicit Knowledge that there is a God, yet) can never attain to a true, spiritual and saving Knowledge of God, without the Concurrence of a Divine and Supernatural Agent: For tho' the Mind of Man, as a Rational Being, be that Capacity or Candle that is to be lighted, yet 'tis Christ that must so enlighten it, as to give us a true Discerning of those things that appertain to him and his Kingdom; and by adhering, and yielding Obedience to its Discoveries, we shall know an Accession of more Light. And the Apostle, speaking of what God by his Spirit had revealed to them, saith expressly, *That the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God; and that as none knoweth the things of a Man, save the Spirit of Man which is in him; so the things of God knoweth no Man, but the Spirit of God:* That the Natural Man neither knoweth nor receiveth the things of the Spirit of God, because they are Spiritually discerned; and to that end they had received the Spirit which is of God. The Light of Nature is occupied about natural

Rom. 1.

19.

2Cor. 4.6

Prov. 20.

27.

Luke 24.

45.

Joh. 1.9.

Eph. 5.13

14, 17.

Psal. 36.

9.

Prov. 4.

18.

1Cor. 2.

10, to

the end.

natural Objects, those things that are within its own Region, acting within its own proper Orb; but reaches not to that knowledge of God, which is Life Eternal, except our natural Powers, or humane Capacities, be illuminated by the Rays of Divine

1 Cor. I. 20. Light: *For the World by Humane Wisdom knows not God.* And Christ saith very plainly and positively, *That none knows the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son reveals him.*

Mat. II. 27. That these strugglings in us should be the Suggestions of Satan, that he should disquiet and disturb People for their Sins, for serving him, and put them upon endeavouring to be freed from their Vassalage under his Power, were absurd to imagine; no, our Saviour puts that beyond a Question, when he asks, *Can a Kingdom, divided against it self, stand?* And by and by, saith plainly, *That whilst the strong Man arm'd keeps the House, his Goods are at peace, till a stronger than he comes to bind him, &c.* So that 'tis clear, it's not the Devil, but the approaches of a Superiour Power, that breaks the peace of People for Sin, and

Mark 3. 24, 27. *divided against it self, stand?* And by and by, saith plainly, *That whilst the*

Luke 11. 21. *strong Man arm'd keeps the House, his*

Goods are at peace, till a stronger than he comes to bind him, &c. So that 'tis clear, it's not the Devil, but the approaches of a Superiour Power, that breaks the peace of People for Sin, and

and that follows and condemns them for Disobedience and Transgression; and is the same that would, and only can redeem their Minds out of that miserable State, and bind that strong Man, and break his power, and cast him out, would they but joyn thereto, and accept of Deliverance by it.

Nor does its being extended to all Men, through all Ages, from their Youth upwards, bespeak it to be therefore Natural or Contemptible; but on the contrary, of the greater moment to all Men: For besides that, the Apostle saith, *A Manifestation of the Spirit is given to every Man to profit withal*; the Blessings and Gifts of God are free and valuable from their intrinsick worth; God in Nature ordained nothing in vain; but by how much any thing is of the greatest use to us, for sustaining and accommodating our natural Life, the more common it is; as the Sun, that gives Light to all, through all Ages, &c. 'Tis we fondly rate things according to our Fancies, and esteem and prize them more for their Rarity and Curiosity, than Usefulness; but God bestows

1 Cor. 12.

7.

flows most universally that which is of the absolute necessity to Man. Are not all Men, that are born Strangers and Enemies to God, in the dark, and at a distance from him, in the State of Nature, and must therefore be Enlightned, Converted, and Born again, and become Spiritual, before we can be reconciled to him? Shall not God then, that would have all Repent and be Saved, cause the Light of the Son of Righteousness to shine upon all, and give a measure of his Grace and Spirit to all, to assist them in the acknowledgment of that in themselves, which they cannot do of themselves; and yet is of indispensable necessity to our Salvation? Wherefore God, by his Spirit, strives with Man, so long as his Day of Visitation lasts.

John 3.
3, 5.

1 Tim. 1.
3, 4.
2 Pet. 3.
9.

Since then our Opposers acknowledge the Spirit and Grace of God, which also is Light, to be in Man, (unless they can shew it, by its manifestly different and Superiour Nature, Tendency, and Operation, to be contra-distinct from that we have been speaking of) we see neither
Absurdity

Absurdity nor Error, in concluding it to be one and the same Grace and Free-Gift of God to all; which is always the same in Nature, tho' it differs in degree; and is that Heavenly Treasure, which God hath committed to our Trust. And blessed will they be, who rightly employ and improve it, and give place and room to this Seed of the Kingdom in their Hearts, where, tho' it may appear at first contrary to the Expectation of Man, little, mean and contemptible, scarcely regarded amongst the stuff, wherewith Mens Minds are filled; yet but joyn to it, that it may exert its Power and Energy, and 'twill grow and increase; let but this *Leaven* have its perfect work, and 'twill leaven the whole Lump into its own Nature.

Mat. 13.
31, 32.

Mat. 13.
33.
Luke 13.
21.

Be pleased to consider, whether we have justly merited the invidious Invektives of our Adversaries, in Believing that the Lord *searches the Heart* of Man, and shews him his *Thoughts*; that he hath and will remember this latter Age of the World; and hath not forgotten to be gracious in performing

Jer. 17.
10.
Rom. 8.
27.
Rev. 2.
23.
Amo. 4.
13.

forming those Bountiful Promises,
 Jer. 31. made in times past to the Off-spring
 33, 34. of the *Gentiles*, in placing his Law in
 Ezek. 36. our Hearts, and putting his Truth in
 26, 27. our Inward Parts; in pouring out of
 Joel 2. his Spirit upon all the Sons and
 28, 29. Daughters of Men; in becoming our
 Act. 2. 16 Teacher, and giving us the Know-
 17, 18. ledge of himself, through the Reve-
 Isa. 54. lation of his Son Jesus Christ; who
 13. is come to open our blind Eyes, and
 Mat. 11. to bring us, that were bound in
 27. Darknes, out of the Prison-house;
 Isa. 42. 7. who hath promised to be with his
 & 61. 1. People to the end of the World; in
 John 14. believing that God hath sent us the
 16, 17, Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, to
 26. and be our Remembrancer, and to guide
 16. 7. and direct us in the way of Truth;
 in attesting the Sufficiency and Uti-
 lity of the Teachings of this Holy
 1 John 2. Unction, sent into our Hearts; in
 20, 27. believing, that tho' Christ be in his
 Glorified Body in Heaven, yet that
 John 14. he is present also in the Hearts of his
 17, 20, People; who is King of Saints, and
 23. & 17. shall he not then rule in them? The
 23, 26. High and Holy One, that inhabits
 Isa. 57. Eternity, hath promised to dwell
 15. also
 2 Cor. 6. 16.

also with the Humble and Contrite,
 to revive and comfort them; shall
 not he, whose Presence fills Heaven
 and Earth, be present in the Heart
 of Man? Shall not he, that rejoyceth
 in the habitable parts of the Earth, *Prov. 8.*
 and delights in the Sons of Men, re- *31.*
 side in his People? Are they not
 Members of him, and he their Head? *1 Cor. 6.*
 Can there be a more intimate Union *15, 17,*
 and Communion, than between the *19.*
 Head and the Body, the Vine and the *John 15.*
 Branches? The same Spirit of Life *4, 5.*
 that is in the Head, is the Life of the
 Body also, and acts it; he that is
 joyned to the Lord is one Spirit :
 Doth not the Life that is in the Root,
 pass to the Branches also, and pre-
 serve them living? Are not all dead
 Branches, in whom this Life is not? *John 6.*
 Whosoever hath the Son of God, and *56, 57.*
 feeds on him, hath Life by him; and *1 John 5.*
 those that have not Christ, who is the *12.*
 Life of his Saints, have not Life :
 How could his People, in all Ages,
 partake of him, if he were not pre-
 sent in them? Surely this Doctrine
 don't deserve to be scoff'd, but is
 most Comfortable to those that are
 sick

sick of Love, and thirst ardently after the Enjoyment [not Hear-say] of him.

Consider seriously these things which are agreeable to Scripture, and with what reason People have derided us for our Belief herein; terming it the Quakers Christ; as tho' his manifesting himself in our Hearts were another, or distinct from Jesus Christ of *Nazareth*, that is glorified with God the Father in Heaven; which we deny: For tho' he be ascended into Heaven, and sits at the right hand of God, far above all Principalities and Powers; yet is not he so circumscribed, but that (as by him all things were made and created, so) he is the Life and Fullness, and filleth all in all in his Church and People. Is the Divinity and Humanity of Christ divided? Is not their inseparable Union the true and intire Christ? Can then his God-head be present, and he who is the Heavenly Man absent? What think you of him that appeared to *John*, and gave him his Commission to the Seven Churches? whom he de-

Rom. 10.

6, 7, 8.

2 Cor. 13

5.

Col. 1. 27

Col. 1. 16

Eph. 1. 23

& 3. 9.

& 4. 10.

describes, *Rev. Chap. 1.* who saith,
Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if Rev. 3.
any Man hear my Voice, and open the door, 20. and
I will come in to him, and will sup with 2. 23.
him, and be with me. The same saith,
I am he that searches the Reins and
Hearts, and I will give unto every one
of you according to your works: Was not Acts 17.
 this the true Christ, the Mediator, by 31.
 whom God will judge the World? Rom. 2.
 And can he make this near inspecti- 16.
 on into the innermost part of the
 Minds of Men, so as no Thought
 can escape his Notice, if he be not
 present there? What made *Paul* de- 2 Tim. 4.
 sire that our Lord Jesus Christ might 22.
 be with *Timothy's* Spirit, if he thought John 1.
 it impossible? Do not all acknow- 16.
 ledge the Spirit of Christ, who is the 1 John 4.
 Anointed, to be in his People, and is 13.
 he then absent? Is its being a Myste-
 ry, far beyond our comprehension
 to conceive how it can be, a suffici-
 Argument that therefore 'tis not so?
 Ought we not in such cases to exer-
 cise Faith, and acquiesce in the
 Testimony of the Holy Ghost, express
 in the sacred Scriptures, rather than
 interpose with our nice and curious

1 Cor. 13.
9, 12.

Subtilties? Prying unnecessarily into things that are too high for us; remembering that Secret things belong to God; and that those that know most here, know only in part the things that are invisible; and see them but as through a Glass. Shall Men that neither know themselves, nor have any intuitive knowledge of the Essences, even of the meanest things, wherewith Nature everywhere presents us, which are obvious to our Senses, aspire to those yet more abstruse, and undertake to account for that which is beyond the reach of the most pregnant Wits to penetrate.

Nor do we thus celebrate Christ's inward and spiritual Appearance in the Soul of Man, with the least intent to diminish the true value and efficacy of what he did without us, or transacted for us, as God manifested in Flesh, but in concurrence with it, and pursuant to it, for the compleating the Salvation intended in it; neither is it in opposition to him, as he is without us; but we believe in him, as he is inwardly revealed

vealed in measure, and also as he is in his own immense Fulness without us, both as he is the one Offering for Sin, and also as he is that quickening Spirit, and immortal Seed by which we are begotten again, and made alive to God; and the Author of that Living Faith, through which 'tis savingly applied to us. For tho' he offered up himself once for all, and set down at the right hand of God, yet 'tis of absolute necessity that he thus appear and operate in the Hearts of his People through all times, or otherwise they can never be happy, nor they receive the full advantage of his Death. But that he doth thus appear and work, is most evident; for since he is the alone Saviour, and none are saved but those who are Regenerated, that Grace or Operative Divine Agent (that is the Efficient of true saving Faith and Regeneration,) must needs be Christ in us, our Hope of Glory. Wherefore 'tis that we so frequently invite People to regard, believe in, close with, and submit to him, as he is the true Light, discovering Evil thus

manifested in their inward Parts, for the full accomplishing their Redemption and Restoration, that they may taste and see for themselves, that the Lord is good and gracious. And to Christ within, otherwise than thus, a measure of the anointing from the Anointed, we don't pretend, whatever People have apprehended concerning us. Which truth our very Opposers are obliged to acknowledge, notwithstanding they so ridicule it in us.

Gen. 3.
15. We hope it's no Error to avouch the Power of Christ to be stronger than that of the Devil, that he is able really to bind him, to bruise his Head, and break his Power, to dispossess and cast him out; to fulfil to the uttermost the end of his coming; to destroy the Works of the Devil, and to save those from their Sins, who shall have true Faith in his Name and Power: Surely it's not inconsistent with Christianity, to believe that Christ can or will thoroughly purge his Floor; that he
1 Th. f. 5.
23. can indeed deliver out of the Prison-house, and restore Man out of the
the

the Fall to God again, and give him power to forsake the Devil, and all his Works, &c.

We find it consonant to Scripture, and the Gospel-Dispensation, to believe, that those who are Regenera-

Rom. 6.
6, 7, 11.
2 Pet. 1.

ted, and Born again of the Spirit, have through the Spirit mortified the first, carnal, corrupt Nature, which cannot please God; and if dead, and slain, and buried too, surely then it

4.
Eph. 4.
22, 23,
24.
Col. 3.
9, 10.

no longer lives, but the Mind is at liberty, and restored to act in new Life; to walk after the Spirit, and, fulfil the Righteousness of the Law;

the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, having set them free from the Law of Sin and Death, which is its Wages. 'Tis for want of Peoples

Rom. 8.
2, 4.

Experiencing this real Birth of the Spirit brought forth, and knowing Freedom in themselves by it, which no Duties or Performances in the Will of Man, nor entertaining of the most refined Opinions in Religion can administer, short of the Law of the Spirit of Christ in their Hearts; 'tis for want of this, that People are so very apprehensive of difficulty, even

to

Mat. 5. 8.
 Heb. 12.
 14.

to impossibility, of living a Holy Righteous Life; which yet is so necessary to our Salvation, that without it we cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven, nor see God. Nor is the Way broader, or its Passage less strait and difficult than they imagine; nay, 'tis utterly impossible for them to walk therein, while they are immers'd in their first, corrupt, unbridled Nature, which cannot keep the Law of God; while their Lusts and Passions are rampant, their Affections inordinate, and Wills unsubjected, and follow the Desires and evil Inclinations of their Minds, without restraint. But if they come to know another Principle and Power to govern their Minds, to create in them new clean Hearts, to regulate and subject their Wills, to subdue and tame their Passions, to limit their Desires, and direct their Affections and Inclinations wholly after that which is good, to meliorate their Spirits throughout, and make them Heavenly-minded, having an aversion to all Evil, and a great love to Vertue and Goodness: Being thus per-

perfectly Transformed, where is the
 extream difficulty now, for the good
 Man, out of the good Treasure of ^{Mat. 12,}
 his Heart, to bring forth good things? ^{35.}
 Will not this new well-inclin'd in-
 side, that now detests Evil, and loves
 and delights in Righteousness, as na-
 turally follow after; and bring forth
 that which is Good, as before he did
 Evil? Here is no force upon Peoples
 Natures, but they are converted, and
 thoroughly leavened into another Na-
 ture, and are in their measures Par-
 takers of the Divine Nature, which ^{2 Pet. 1,}
 only can work the Will of God. ^{4.}

We request our Piously-inclined
 Neighbours, well and seriously to
 weigh and consider the absolute ne-
 cessity there is for every true *Christian*
 thus to know their Minds moulded
 and fashioned anew, by the Power
 and Spirit of Christ, working migh- ^{Col. 1. 29}
 tily in them, in order to their plea-
 sing God, by a Holy Righteous Life,
 having escaped the Corruption that
 is in the World through Lust; and
 considering that 'tis not so soon at-
 tained, as apprehended in the Un-
 derstanding to be necessary: That
 with

with all diligence they address themselves to the performing that which is the the main and proper business of our Lives. Wherefore as it hath pleased the Divine Power to give us

2 Pet. 1. all things pertaining to Life and
 3: Godliness, so let us with a vigilant
 Tit. 2. attention to, and co-working with
 11, 12. that Grace, which to that end is
 Phil. 2. given, work out our Savation with
 12, 13. a reverend Fear; since a good degree of attainment herein is soon lost, except there be a constant sedulous Watchfulness upon the Mind, amidst all Business and Concerns, to have a check upon our *Words* and *Thoughts*: and a diligent pressing forward: For

Mat. 26. while we live in this World, we are
 41. liable to Temptations, and may enter thereinto also, without a strict Care and Watchfulness; our Senses presenting many Baits to our Minds on every hand, which Satan makes use of to beguile, and many Provocations offer themselves in our Pilgrimage; against all which, God's Grace is

2 Cor. 12. sufficient Armour, as our Minds are
 9. season'd by it: So that where any shortness is, 'tis through Insincerity, Negligence, or Inadvertency. Or

Or is it a dangerous heinous Heresie, that we, with very many Professors of Christianity, believe the Universality of the Love of God to all Mankind; that God (who is good to all, whose Mercies extend to all the Works of his Hands) is sincere in his Intention, and Attestation thereof, and doth not design to delude us, when he affirms, *That as certainly as he lives, he desires not the death of a Sinner, but rather that he would return and live*; that God, whose Love and Mercy is unlimited, doth graciously and generously offer Salvation, thro' Jesus Christ, (upon certain Conditions to be performed on our part) to all Mankind, to every individual Man and Woman upon the face of the Earth; which is the true Gospel-message, good Tydings of great Joy, which shall be to all People, Peace on Earth, and good will towards Men; good cause indeed to rejoyce, that all are within the verge of Mercy, and free Pardon; that God is indeed no Respector of Persons, but among all Nations and People, he or she that fears him, and works Righte-

Ps. 145.

Ezek. 33.

11. and

18. 23.

John 3.

14, 15,

16, 17.

Isa. 55. 1.

Rev. 22.

17.

Rom. 5.

18.

Luke 2.

10, 14.

Ma. 5. 7.

Ezek. 18.

21, 22, to

the end.

Acts 10.

34, 35.

Righteousness, is of him accepted;
 and that Christ died for the Sins of
 the whole World, yea, for every
 Man: Surely then all, for whom he
 died, are thereby put into a capacity
 for Salvation; that Saving Grace
 hath appeared to all Men, and a
 Manifestation of the Spirit is given
 to every Man to profit withal. And
 that none are Reprobated, but those
 that continue to be deaf to the Calls
 of this Grace, and resist the Spirit,
 and hide and neglect their Talents,
 till the Day of their Visitation be
 over, and Christ so withdraws him-
 self, as to cease longer to strive
 with them; so that the means being
 taken away, they are left to them-
 selves; and given up to Hardness of
 Heart; that being absent, that should
 prepare, tender and mollify it, that
 now they cannot Repent, Believe,
 and be Converted.

If thus to believe, be a dangerous
 and pernicious Error, we confess we
 are Guilty, and not like to be other-
 wise; for we cannot perswade our
 selves to embrace that Anti-evangel-
 ical Opinion, That God from all
 Eternity

Eternity hath personally and unconditionally, without respect to their accepting or rejecting the Salvation offer'd in Christ, Elected some, and Reprobated others, by an Immutable Decree; so that those who are so Elected shall certainly be saved, let them do what they will, for God's Decree can't be revers'd, let the unstable Mind of Man vary as it will; and those that are Reprobated, were in effect damned Thousands of Years before they were Born; so that their Salvation is put beyond all hope, let them seek it never so earnestly and diligently, and be never so desirous to serve and please God. For besides, that this *sad Tidings*, instead of *glad Tidings*, if it were really true in it self, puts an end to the whole business of Religion, by rendring all Worship and Devotion, all Preaching, Praying, Assembling together, and Holy Living, as 'twere useless, by invalidating all whatsoever on Man's part, as nothing contributing (as a necessary Condition on his part to be performed or neglected)

lected) towards his Salvation, or
 Eternal Destruction. We dare not
 take up an Opinion so diametrically
 opposite to the very Attributes of
 God, and his repeated Protestations
 to the contrary, and with some Men
 thus presume to arraign his Justice,
 Mercy and Goodness. We cannot
 believe, that God, who is Love it
 self, and Goodness it self, and hath
 always manifested a wonderful Care
 and Concern for Man, as his darling
 Creature; (it being disagreeable to
 his Justice, to condemn those that
 have not deserved to be punished,
 and having no pleasure in the death
 of him that dies) should yet make
 the major part of Mankind with
 design to damn them, unprovok'd
 thereto, without ever tendering
 them Salvation; or that he would
 make the far greater number whol-
 ly incapable of accepting the Salva-
 tion tendered them, by putting it out
 of their power to perform those
 Terms upon which he offers it, and
 then condemn them to Eternal Mi-
 sery, for not complying with those
 Conditions, that 'twas impossible for
 them

Wisd. 12.

15, 16.

Ezek. 18.

32.

Wisd. 11.

23, 24.

them to observe. For he don't only call to all the ends of the Earth Iſa. 45. 22. (which implies all Mankind) to look to him, and be ſaved; but he hath given to every one a Portion of his Spirit to enable them ſo to do: He hath not only ſent forth the Son of his Love, to ſhed his Blood for every Man, to be liſted up, as *Mofes* liſted up the Brazen Serpent, that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh; but he alſo draws them, John 3. 14, 15. 16. and as they will receive it, toucheth them with that Divine Magnet that only can incline and impower them effectually to turn to that Pole, in which all our true Happineſs centers. John 6. 44, 45.

But this is the condemnation, that Light is come into the World, and Men love Darkneſs rather than Light, becauſe their Deeds are evil; and hate the Light, and will not bring their Deeds to it, leſt it ſhould reprove them; for whatſoever is reproveable, is made manifeſt by the Light, but Men love their own Broad ways, to purſue the ſight of their, Eph. 5. 13. Eyes, and deſire of their Minds, and Eccleſ. 1. 9.

therefore hate to be control'd therein and reform'd. The Apostle stirring up the *Ephesians* to Purity of Life, and to avoid several Evils there mentioned, saith expressely, *Let no*

Eph. 5. 6, 7. Man deceive you with vain Words; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the Children of Disobedience.

Rom. 8. 13. And in another place, That those who live after the Flesh, shall die. So that

'tis for want of People's embracing the Means, and bringing their Deeds to the Light of Christ in their Hearts, and heeding the

Prov. 6. 22. Reproofs of Instruction, which is the way of Life; for want of sow-

Gal. 6. 8. ing to the Spirit, and by it mortifying the Deeds of the Flesh, that People are lost and sentenced to Perdition; and not because they were personally and unconditionally reprobated from all Eternity. God

1 Tim. 2. 3, 4. who is Lord of all, is gracious unto all, and would have all Men to be saved; but they disobey the Call of God; and reject his Offers, and are

Rev. 3. 20. deaf to those Knocks of our Saviour for Reception and Entertainment in their Hearts, and choose and prefer the

the present World, and will not deny themselves to follow Christ. 'Tis not as these Men say, because Salvation was never within their reach; if 'were not, what must we think? Were those feigned Tears then, that our Saviour shed over *Jerusalem*, when the Day of its Visitation was over? Saying also, *How often would I have gathered thee, as an Hen gathers her Chickens, but you Would not; not, you Could not.*

Luke 13.

34.

Mat. 23.

37.

But if any Men can be so hardy as to entertain an Opinion so derogatory to the Justice, Mercy, Love and Paternal Care of God, and repugnant to the Gospel-message; we cannot but admire what should induce them to obtrude it upon others, and urge it as tho' 'twas a necessary Point to be believed in the Christian Religion; for we cannot apprehend how this begets Love to God, increaseth Faith in Christ, and raiseth our Veneration for him, excites to Diligence, and encourages Piety, which is that which advanceth true Religion; but on the contrary, it's plain, that it tends to the indulging

some in a security, and procure in others a slight Esteem of the Death and Sacrifice of Christ, as being partial, and cast them into Despond; and probably may encourage both to gratifie the Desires of their Minds to the full extent, since nothing can alter such a supposed Decree of God one way or other. Yet we deny not the Prescience of God, who fore-knows all things; things past, present and to come, being at once present to him; so that it may be said, such who believe in Christ with that living active Faith, that works by Love, and excites to Obedience, and persevere therein unto the end, and so know Salvation by him, are in him in whom the Election is before the World began; and that those who so believe not, but reject the Tenders of his Love, and by persisting in Disobedience, neglect so great Salvation, are condemned already. Nor do we deny such a Preference, as that some are made Stewards over more, and some fewer Talents, according to which their Improvement ought to be; Where much is given,
much

much is required; and where less is given, less is required: for God is just and equal in all his Ways, he is not a hard Master, that he should exact or expect more than the Improvement of his own: Had he that received but one Talent, imploy'd it, and made it Two, we doubt not but it had been accepted; for we believe that none are from Eternity absolutely excluded without any Talent, and that a Day also is afforded, wherein 'tis possible for them to improve it. So that though the Grace may work more powerfully in some than in others, yet are all left without Excuse.

Mat. 25.
14, to 28.

There is yet another Opinion dependant on this, which we cannot receive neither, as they state it, for which our Opposers think very ill of us; that is, once in a state of Grace, and ever so; that there is no total or final falling away from Grace. How this Doctrine promotes true Zeal and Piety, and improves Christianity, we can't understand; nor see no other reason why it's Votaries should be fond of it, but because 'tis

con-

concordant to that of Personal Election and Reprobation; so that those who imbrace the one, are bound to believe the other: But otherwise, certainly it tends rather to slacken than spur on People to that care and diligence, and constant unwearied watchfulness to Prayer, which our Lord so much exhorted to, and the Apostles so solicitously prets the Saints every where to be found in, as of absolute necessity. What else means those Promises of Reward in the *Revelations*, to those who should overcome, and hold out to the end; but to ingage them to a constant Perseverance? Or what needed it, if 'twere impossible for them to fall short; whom we suppose none will deny to have been in a state of Grace? And the Church of *Ephesus* was threatned to have their Candlestick removed, if they repented not, and did their first works; and that of *Laodicea*, to be spewed out of his Mouth. Who can say those foolish Virgins in the Parable were not once in a state of Grace, whose Lamps were once lighted and burning

Rev. 2. 5.
& 3. 16.

Mat. 25.
8.

ing, as well as trimm'd, or else they could not properly be said to be gone out? Or that those were not called by saving Grace, in whose Hearts the Heavenly Seed sprung up, and for a time prosper'd, till the the Bryars and Thorns, the over-care and concern about the things of this Life, choak'd it; 'twas not, that they had no day of Visitation from God, wherein they might have wrought out their Salvation, had they continued to make the Kingdom of Heaven, and its Righteousness, their first and chiefest Choice, and placed their Treasure there, and disintangled themselves from those unnecessary Cares; the Seed that was sown and sprung up, was the very same with that, which in the honest Heart brought forth Fruit abundantly.

Luke 8. 7
8, 14, 15.

Surely *Paul*, that Great Apostle, was not of these Mens Opinion, who after he had long laboured in the Gospel, takes care to keep under his Body, lest while he Preach'd to others, he himself should be a Cast-away; whom yet we doubt not, but they will grant was then effectually

1 Cor. 9.
27.

effectually called, and in a state of Grace. And the Author to the *Hebrews* writing in the third Chapter, to those he calls holy Brethren, and Partakers of the Heavenly Calling. Ver. the 12th, exhorts them to take heed, lest there was in any of them an evil Heart of Unbelief in departing from the Living God. And again, Chap. 4. 1. *Let us therefore fear lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, (surely then not eternally reprobated) any of you should seem to come short of it. Ver. 11. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any Man fall after the same example of Unbelief.* Again, Chap. 6. Verse 4, 5, 6. speaking of those who had been enlightened, and tasted of the Heavenly Gift and were made Partakers of the Holy Ghost, and that had tasted the good Word of God, and the Powers of the World to come, (shewd signs that they were effectually call'd and in a state of Grace) that if they should fall away, 'would be impossible to renew them again to Repentance; not because they were eternally reprobated, but because they

Cruci-

crucified to themselves the Son of God afresh, because they grieved his good Spirit, and rejected the Means. Hath not the Lord said, If a Righteous Man turns from his Righteousness, he shall die; Who can be Righteous without the assistance of God's

Ezek. 18.
24, 26.
& 33. 18.

Grace? No man can make himself so; 'tis not in Man to direct his own Ways; and yet it seems 'tis possible for him to fall from it, after he hath lived so long under its conduct, as by it to be made Righteous; and one would think, should then be sanctified too. Our Saviour saith of himself, *I am the true Vine, ye are the Branches*

es; my Father is the Husband-man,

John 15.
1, 2, 5, 6.

every Branch in me that beareth not Fruit, he taketh away. Again, If a Man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a Branch, and is withered. Surely those who are Branches in Christ, while so, are adopted of the Father; and yet it seems 'tis possible for them to fall away, and be cut off as withered Branches; whence he often repeats this Condition, If ye abide in me; and presently he saith the way to continue in his Love, was to do

John 15.
10.

his

his Will, as he had that of his Father's, and continued in his Love. But though we can't embrace their Opinion, for their Reasons, and as they state it; but own, that 'tis possible for People to make a considerable Progress in Grace, and yet for want of a careful and constant Watchfulness to that Grace, they may fall away: Yet we believe such a State and Growth in Grace, thro' a vigilant Attention thereto, and such a degree of Faith attainable, as that there is no more going forth.

Tho' we speak of God's tending, and Man's accepting or rejecting the Offers of his Love; yet far be it from us to assert, That fallen Man, in his own Natural State, can of himself think a good Thought, much less will a good Deed, or in his own power convert his own depraved Will to God, any more than the Needle can turn and direct it self towards the Pole, without being impregnated by the Loadstone. For tho' Adam's Fall introduced no such real change in the Faculties of Man's Soul, as to subvert their Natural Order,

do, and so destroy the Natural Liberty and Freedom of his Will, but that what he wills, he wills freely, and not by constraint; yet for as much as he died from that Divine Life, to which he was united, and from whence he derived power and ability to will and do that which was good, he became thenceforth utterly incapable so to do, as of himself, otherwise than as he is influenced by, and assents and yields to the drawings of that Divine Grace, which God in his great Love hath liberally bestowed on Mankind, both to illuminate their Understandings, and also incline their Wills: Which is both sufficient, and freely offers to reclaim Man, and convert his Will, and finally unite his Mind to it self, and therein restore to him the power of willing and doing good; which Man never had, nor never can have, but in conjunction with this pure Principle of Divine Light and Life: But he may, and is most inclinable to slight its Offers, and resist its Endeavours; and, while so, can't experience that Power and Vertue

that

that is found in it, where it freely exerts it self. So that as it must be acknowledged, that Man acts as a free Agent, and as having an Elective Power, and that God in his various Dispensations treats him as such; yet is this Gift of God the first mover, in all his motions, towards that which is truly good and acceptable to him; which is always so near and ready to assist and help a Man (while it continues to strive with him) that probably none that neglect its assistance, and do evil, but upon reflection, plainly perceive they may do otherwise. Whence 'tis clear, Man's destruction is of himself, and his only sufficiency and help is in God; who never requires any Duty of him, but he furnishes him with a suitable power to perform it, would he but regard and close with it.

But that which seems to be our capital Error, and the top of all their Charge, and that which is to silence all Pleas in our behalf, is our omitting the use of the Ordinances (so called) of *Baptism*, and *Bread* and *Wine*.

Wine. *John* indeed, as the next immediate Forerunner of Christ to prepare his Way, gave an Alarm to the *Jews*, that were so secure under the Law of *Moses*, and proclaim'd the Kingdom of Heaven at hand; and the time come, wherein God commanded the *Jews*, as well as others, every where to Repent; 'twas not sufficient for them to go on in sinning, and then offer those respective Sacrifices which the Law enjoyn'd them for the same; but now the Wrath of God was near to be reveal'd from Heaven against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men; 'twas not sufficient to deck and make clean the outside of the Cup and Platter, but the inside was to be cleansed, and then the outside would be clean also. The Ax was now laid to the Root, and every Tree that brought not forth good Fruit, was to be hewn down. The Law of *Moses* took hold on exterior Acts, and could not make perfect, as pertaining to the Conscience; but now that Dispensation was about to be established, that

Mat. 3. 2.

Acts 17. 30.

Rom. 1. 18.

Mat. 23. 25, 26.

Mat. 3. 10.

Heb. 9. 9. 2 Cor. 10. 5.

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comes

comes nearer home, and takes cognizance of the very Thoughts, that Sin be not so much as conceived by the Wills joyning thereto. Wherefore *John* was sent to administer the Baptism of Repentance, as a lively Figure of that which was presently after to follow ; for *John's* Baptism was not capable to produce this Effect upon the Mind : And he himself testifies, *That though he baptized them with Water, yet he that came after him, that was before him, and more honourable than he, should baptize them with the Holy Ghost, and with Fire ; that his Fan was in his hand, and that 'twas he should thoroughly purge his floor.* Which is the great Work that is to be done under his Gospel-Dispensation, to take away the Sins of the World, and destroy the Works of the Devil, to purifie Peoples Hearts, and make them Spiritual-minded : This is the proper Effect of Christ's lasting Baptism ; not the washing away of the Filth of the Flesh, but the answer of a good Conscience towards God ; to purge our Consciences from dead Works, to serve the

James 1.
15.

Mat. 3.
11, 12.

1 Joh. 3.
8.

1 Pet. 3.
21.

the Living God in Newness of Life.

The Baptism of Christ is but one, Eph. 4. 5.

and those who by it are Baptized into Jesus Christ, are Baptized into his Death, and their Old Man crucified with him, that the Body of Sin may be destroyed, and they no longer serve Sin; because they that are dead with Christ, are freed from Sin, and made alive to God, to live a Holy Righteous Life. These are the blessed Effects of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire, and Benefits that redound to those who are in truth washed by Christ, in that holy Laver, which entitles us to a part in him: 'Tis our chiefest Concern to know this inward spiritual Baptism of Christ, that our Hearts may be Washed, Purified, and Sanctified by the Spirit of God; and that we really put on Christ, and are in him, who is the Substance, in whom the Types ended. *John* knew and foretold himself, That *he must decrease, but Christ must increase*: He doth not say, I shall cease presently at once, so soon as Christ's Baptism takes place; but

Rom. 6.
3, 6, 7, 8,
11.

1 Cor. 12.
13.
Zach. 13.
1.

1 Cor. 6.
11.

John 3.
30.

I must decrease. But were Water-Baptism to continue always amongst Christians, then would not *John* decrease: Nor will it solve this Allegation, That 'twas abolish'd as *John's*, and instituted anew as Christ's: For then hath Christ his different Gospel-Baptisms, which is erroneous.

We grant that some of the Apostles did use Water-Baptism for a time; but we believe, 'twas rather in compliance with the Circumstances of Time, than of Necessity, and in Condescension to the Weakness of Believers in the very Infancy of the Church, and even the same Age wherein *John* Baptized; who was not only a true Messenger of God in his time, but had gained great Credit among the People, and his Memory and Message could not soon be forgotten; nor was it easie to draw them from a Practice, that but just before was acknowledged to be of Divine Authority. For we find the Apostles tolerated the believing *Jews* to live in certain Rites and Ceremonies of the *Mosaic* Law, notwithstanding the *Messiah* was

was come in the Flesh, and abro-
 gated them; so difficult 'tis to dis-
 engage People from those things,
 wherein they have been Educated,
 and to which their Minds are once
 glewed; and some of them would
 have had the believing *Gentiles* come
 under that Yoak, and be Circum-
 cised; which *Paul*, their great Apo-
 stle, withstood, seeing beyond all
 those things; knowing that the
 Kingdom of God was not Meats and
 Drinks, but Righteousness, Peace, Rom. 14.
17.
 and Joy in the Holy Ghost; and
 not in Word, but Power; not di- 1 Cor. 4.
20.
 vers Washings, and carnal Ordi- Col. 2. 14
16, 17.
 nances, which were Shadows, and 22. 10.
Heb. 9.
 to perish; but the Body is of Christ, 9, 10.
Gal. 5. 2.
 and those that are in him, are in him
 compleat; believing, that if they
 were Circumcised, Christ should
 profit them nothing: And yet we
 see such was his Condescension, that
 he himself, notwithstanding, Cir-
 cumcised *Timothy*; and when he was
 at *Jerusalem*, shaved his Head, &c. Acts 21.
20 to 28.
 behaving himself as a *Jew*, for the
 sakes of those that saw not as far as
 himself. And notwithstanding he
 was

was such a laborious and zealous
 Publisher of the Gospel, yet we find
 he Baptized but very few, and thanks
 God that he Baptized no more, (sure-
 ly 'twas not then essential to the Go-
 spel,) but saith plainly, That he was
 not sent to Baptize, but to Preach
 the Gospel; to turn People from
 Darknes to Light, from the Power
 of Satan to God, who had delivered
 them from the Power of Darknes,
 and translated them into the King-
 dom of his dear Son; 'tis this that is
 of absolute Necessity to our Salvati-
 on; he did not then Baptize because
 some others did it, which yet is as
 large a Commission, as perhaps, any
 pretend to now-a-days. Of which
 we say as he did of Circumcision,
 (though we don't grant 'tis the Seal
 of the Covenant, and introduced in
 room of Circumcision, as some will
 have it, but without Scripture-au-
 thority,) neither Baptism nor no
 Baptism availeth any thing short of a
 new Creature; which is the truest
 Sign of Possessing the inward Spi-
 ritual Grace, and of being in Christ;
 and is beyond all visible Signs what-
 soever.

The

1 Cor. I.
 14.

Ver. 17.
 Col. I. 13

The Apostles having thus indulged it, 'tis no wonder that 'twas continued, and since got footing under the Degeneracy; for as Corruption entred the Church, and was encreased, the Spirit and Life of Christianity was more and more eclipsed, and the Minds of its Professors grew darker; and then adhered more to external Performances; and not only continued that, which had been used by their Predecessors, or at least something in its stead; but by degrees added more Rites and Ceremonies; and at length began to trim and deck that Religion, that in it self was plain, simple, and homely, and consisted more in Power and Divine Love, than outward Observations: Which in process of time was so drest and garnished, that its August Splendour became inviting to others. Under this Degeneracy in degree sprung up Infanr-Baptism, a meer Humane Invention, without any Scripture-Authority, either by Precept or Practice; wherefore for those who don't use Baptism, as 'twas instituted under its proper Dispensation

sation, to upbraid us for neglecting it, is absurd and unreasonable.

But that which makes the loudest Out-cry of all, is our Dis-use of the Sacrament, so called, of Bread and Wine; 'tis this is that pestilent mortal Error that, in our Opposers Account, renders us worse, than the Papists, whatever 'tis that makes us the Spawn of the Jesuites; which with several others, are Epithets, that to be sure were calculated (tho' unjustly) to render us as odious as may be to the People, and carry a great deal of Rancor in them, and favour of too much Gall, to proceed from the meek Spirit of Christianity, that teacheth to be at Peace with, and have Charity for all that call on the Lord out of a pure Heart. But whether upon the whole Matter, we deserve this severe bitter Censure; or whether those that so liberally bestow it upon us, have a just right to cast the first Stone, is what we desire our sober Neighbours to consider, and not judge us also meerly from an implicit Belief of what others say of us. We are not ignorant of the great Noise and Stir

2Tim. 2.
22.

Stir there hath been about this in
Christendom, to the scandalizing Chri-
 stianity among both *Jews* and *Turks*:
 The Papiſts have improv'd it to
 downright Idolatry, affirming 'tis the
 the real Body and Blood, and as
 ſuch adore it; (one would think
 'twere better let alone:) Others;
 that Chriſt is in it, though they know
 not how: One ſaith 'tis this, another
 'tis that; while they all ſeem to ex-
 pect that from it which it doth not
 neceſſarily adminiſter; for want of
 diſtinguiſhing between that Bread ^{John 6.}
 of Life that came down from Heaven ^{51, 56.}
 (that Fleſh and Blood of Chriſt, that
 giveth Life to all that feed thereon,
 by which they dwell in him and he
 in them;) and that Supper which
 was eaten by the Primitive Chriſtians
 in Commemoration of his Death
 and Sacrifice; which are not ſo con-
 nect, as that the one neceſſarily in-
 cludes the other, as experience a-
 bundantly teſtifies; would People
 but be true to themſelves herein;
 how many are there that receive
 this from Year to Year, who yet
 complain all their Lives of Deadneſs,
 G Dry-

John 14.
20, 21,
23.

Dryness and Leanness of Soul, and want of Power; not receiving that renewing of Life, and Spiritual Strength that is proposed in it, and so but an empty Shadow indeed: For how can they in truth expect to feed on Christ Spiritually in their Hearts, who will not admit that he really dwells in his Saints, but esteem it an Error in those that do. However, we believe all People ought to be well persuaded in their own Minds, and seriously considerate in these and other Religious Practises; and not take up things meerly traditionally, because others do it; nor ought they to be vehemently prest to or against things not absolutely essential to Salvation, in which their Understandings are not clear; Nor should any be scold or reproacht for those things which to them are Matter of Conscience, (and therefore Sacred; tho' to others it may appear of less moment) a Practice that is a great Shame among People professing Christianity. Nor do we judge and condemn those that are found in the Practice either of this or Water-Baptism.

Baptism, as 'twas primitively used; whose Sober, Christian, Circumspect Lives, witnesseth to their sincere Intentions herein; who may be conscientiously tender in, and fearful to omit it, till they are otherwise fully perswaded: But for us, to whom the barrenness and emptiness of these outward visible Things are manifest, we cannot continue therein; they yielding no true Soul-Satisfaction, nor administering any inward Spiritual Grace to us. Wherefore having tasted that the Lord is good and gracious, we wait for the sincere ^{1 Pet. 2.} ^{2, 3.}

Milk of that Word, by which we have been begotten to God, that we may receive strength thereby, and grow in Grace, and the Knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and a greater Acquaintance with that true inward Spiritual Communion and Fellowship with him, wherein he sups with his Saints, and they with him, and receive Life by him, who dwells in them, and they in him; as the Members are joyned to the Head, and partake of its Life, and live by it; or the Branches to the Vine, ^{2 Pet. 3.} ^{18.} ^{Rev. 3.} ^{20.} ^{Eph. 5.} ^{30.} ^{John 15.} ^{5.}

which receive Life, Vertue and Nourishment from him, whereby Fruit is brought forth to the Glory of God, and well pleasing to him.

'Tis not sufficient that we participate hereof once a Month or Quarter, Exod. 16.
21. but as the *Jews* had their Manna, fresh every Morning, so we ought to receive a daily Supply, and renewing of Strength in our inward Man, by eating that Heavenly Bread, that nourisheth up to Eternal Life, and drinking plentifully of that Well of Living-Water, which in the Saints springs up to Life Eternal; for as in God we live, move and have our very being; so is Christ the true and proper Life of the inward Man, by which it truly lives to God, nor can it live but by him. Those that are begotten to God by the Word of Life, and are born again of the Spirit, are privileged thus to feed on Christ, and enjoy him; which none can do that are not first quickened and made alive by him; none can receive Life, Sap and Vertue from him as Head and Vine, that are not first joyned to him as Members and Branches of him;

John 4.
14.

him; nor is it sufficient to make People Members of Christ, and give them admittance to feed on him, in that they were Sprinkled when Infants, &c. as we have already express'd, tho' they should eat Bread, and drink Wine all their Days.

Since then we no less enjoy the Substance without the Sign, why may we not omit it, as either being but temporary, or not of absolute necessity; as well as our Opposers do that which was instituted (to use their own term) at the same time, and with as great solemnity, and greater formality, and was no less positively commanded under the same pretence? Why may not the same Authority absolve us from the use of this, and exempt us from being chargeable with the breach of a Command of Christ, as discharge them from washing one anothers Feet and secure them from the like censure? As also that of the Apostles, concerning things strangled and Blood; and that of *James*, anointing the Sick with Oil? Why should they be thus partial? Have we not

John 13.
4, 5, 8,
14, 15.

Acts 15.
20, 29
Jam. 5.
14, 15.

good reason to conclude, that if these had not been long since laid down, they would have cleav'd as close to them; and that had those of Baptism and Bread and Wine been then discontinued also, they would be now as easie under its omission? For Tradition, Custom and Education, makes greater impressions on Mens Minds, than perhaps every one may be sensible of; nor is it an easie Task at first, to move them from those things to which they have been fastned by it. Would but People wholly relinquish these Prejudices, and consider it impartially; 'tis probable there may appear no such real difference, as justly to omit the one, and yet with equal reason to continue the other; since 'tis not that Bread that gives Life to the Soul, nor doth necessarily include it; but that Christ may be and is received, and fed on without it. Nor that those can be thought to forget his Death and Sacrifice, who sensibly partake of the Benefits thereof, and pursue its Ends; who are taught and assisted by him to live a Godly Righteous Life, and bear about

Tit. 2. 14
Gal. 1. 4.

about in them the Marks of the Dy- Mat. 5.
21.
2 Cor.
5. 15.
 ing of our Lord Jesus; who died for
 all, that those who live should no
 longer live to themselves, fulfilling
 the Desires of their Minds, but to
 him that died for them; that through phil. 3.
10
 the Power of his Resurrection they
 may mortifie the Deeds of the Flesh,
 and have Fellowship with his Suffer-
 ings, in whom his Life is made
 manifest. Neither can those who
 acknowledge his Death and Sacri-
 fice, and partake from time to time
 of this Bread and Wine in memory
 of it, and yet are not by him redeem-
 ed from a vain Conversation, and
 made conformable to his Death, and
 so feed on him, as to participate of
 that Life that comes by him, in any
 wise escape Damnation, let their
 Pretensions be what they will.

Since then God hath replenish'd
 our Hearts, with his Grace, and hath
 not with-held his Heavenly Manna
 from us, but daily owns us by his
 comfortable Presence, to our great
 satisfaction, under the Omission of
 these things; supplying our Wants
 and Necessities, as we have recourse

unto him, in that which ever hath
access unto him, having our conti-

** For we intend not
to Apologize for those,
who, tho' they may be
call'd by our Name,
yet live loosely, and
walk disorderly, and
are Blemishes and a
Grief to us; which
yet ought to be im-
puted to their Insin-
cerity or Unwatchful-
ness, and not to the
Insufficiency of the
Principle they pre-
tend to.*

nual Dependancy on him,
who enables and strength-
ens those of us * that re-
tain our Primitive Sincerity
and Integrity, to lead
a Sober, Pious, Christian
Life, as becomes the Go-
spel of Christ, which is the
certain Product of Spirit-
ual Grace, and forasmuch
as our Opposers acknow-

ledge it to be but an outward visi-
ble Sign, and dare not say that the
inward Spiritual Grace is tied to it,
nor that 'tis of absolute necessity to
Salvation; with what reason do they
Unchristian us, and so load us with
Calumnies and Accusations on this
Account; using it as an Instance to
blacken us, and condemn in gross
our whole Christian Profession, prin-
cipally from hence; as though 'twere
the chief thing that constitutes a
Christian, and entitles him to the
Benefits that come by Christ.

What shall we think then of per-
haps more than Two parts in Three
of

of their own Assembly, who no more practice this than do we, and yet are many of them as sober People, and if we may know (as Christ directs us,) by their Fruits, are doubtless as near the Kingdom, and no less in a State of Grace, than are those who so exult in, and value themselves upon this Performance; which however it may bound and distinguish particular Societies and Communications, 'tis certain no Observations nor Performances short of being ruled and governed by the Spirit of Christ, as Head, can entitle us to a Membership in him; we may make a specious Shew, and carry a System of Divinity in our Heads; but if he rules not our Hearts, we are none of his. 'Twere well they were as thoughtful to fulfil all Righteousness in every respect, and as zealously careful and concern'd to observe and punctually perform all the Commands and Injunctions to which the Christian Religion obligeth them, and to qualify themselves to be rightful Inheritors of those Blessings and Promises pronounced by our Saviour

Saviour, as they tenaciously adhere to this; as though 'twere indeed the Sum both of Mens Duty and Enjoyments, and that their Salvation turned upon this very Pin; which yet People may perform, while their Wills are unsubdued, and Lusts unmortified. But we find that Men have been apt enough to be busily employed about Mint, Annis and Cummin, whilst they neglect the weightier Matters, to run into, and cry up, and maintain those exterior parts of Religion, that are reconcileable to an Unconverted State.

If the Professors of Christianity were less taken up about Signs and Shadows, and nice and unnecessary Scrutinies and Distinctions, wherewith they perplex it, and more devoted to observe the weighty, important, and indispensable Precepts of Christ, and demonstrate the Power that Christianity hath over their Minds, by affording signal instances of their being his true Disciples, and rightful Heirs of his Kingdom, being in measure invested with his Divine Vertues and Graces; we should have less

less Envy, Variance, Back-biting, and Detraction, which weaken the common Interest and Piety, and give our common Enemy an advantage; and more Christian Love, Peace, Concord and good Neighbourhood amongst us. If all that mean well, did but Pursue Vertue, love it, and encourage it, where-ever it appears; and hate Vice and Evil in all, and discountenance it every where; and make these the Measures of their Christian Charity, rather than Parallel Opinions in lesser Matters, 'twould bring us nearer together, and more advance True Piety, than all their contending about different Apprehensions in things far less essential. God, who regards not Names, but Natures, knows among all Nations and People who are his; and the Rule he left us to know also, was their Fruits, their Actions being the exertion of their Wills; all Mankind are either under the Power and Conduct of the Spirit of God, or else of the Devil; all are either Carnal or Spiritual-minded; and as is the Spring and bent of their Desires
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and Affections, so is their Actions ; each Birth have their proper Products, which are contrary to each other. So that let what Notions or Opinions soever possess Mens Heads, they live according to that Spirit and Principle that governs their Hearts. We cannot gather Grapes of Thorns, nor Figs of Thistles ; no Fountain sends forth bitter Water and sweet at the same time. 'Tis an Evangelical Truth, Those that live in Envy and Strife, and bring forth the Fruits of the Flesh ; are of their Father the Devil ; and those who by the Spirit, mortifie those corrupt Lusts and Affections, and bring forth the Fruits of the Spirit, adorning the Doctrine of God our Saviour, by a Sober, Godly, Righteous Life, are of God ; for herein the Children of God, are manifest from the Children of the Devil.

Gal. 5.
19, 20,
21, 22,
23, 24.

Eph, 5.9.

1 Joh. 3.
10.

Thus have we candidly, though briefly, exprest our real Opinion and Belief in those Points, in which we apprehend our Adversaries have endeavour'd most to expose us ; which we hope may prove satisfactory to those,

those, who are not resolved to think ill of us: But to speak fully to every critical, trifling Objection, were a tedious Task, as well as vastly beyond the Extent of our Design. We request our serious Neighbours to hear and see for themselves, and not take things upon trust from Others, and judging the things they know not, condemn us by hear-say. Don't be imposed upon, by those whose peevish Humours would have all do like themselves; who either look not at all, or but very coyly into the Books of those, they have taken a pet against, whose Perswasion in some things differs from what they have pronounced Orthodox; as tho' Truth were their peculiar inclosure; which yet certainly argues either a great deal of Prejudice, or a feeble and fleeting Judgment, that dares not trust it self. Were our Books stult with such palpable Errors as is suggested, surely 'twere not so dangerous Reading them: Who fears to read the Alchoran? But on the contrary, 'tis a strong indication that they contain much truth; for as 'tis
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the proper Object of the Understanding; so where it appears with a clear Evidence, answering to Peoples own Experience, 'tis very forcible and prevalent upon the Minds of those who diligently seek it for love of it, and willingly deposit all pre-engagements of Mind in its disquisition. Be then so just to us, and kind to your selves, as to relinquish all Prejudice and Prepossessions, and impartially examine the truth of these things; search the Sacred Scriptures diligently, with an inclination rather to find and embrace Truth, than to support a received Opinion; try whether 'tis so or not; comparing it with your own Experiences, and the Witness of God in your own Hearts. Though our Belief in some of these Particulars don't exactly quadrate to that of our Opposers, it don't therefore necessarily follow, 'tis not agreeable to Truth and Scripture: Nor can they give us any infallible assurance, that their Conceptions are a true Standard of Truth, notwithstanding they vend their Apprehensions as the only Orthodox; yes, and

and are displeased too with those that can't be determined by them.

We have no Design, carrying on behind the Curtain, howsoever our Sober Demeanour may be uncharitably (not to say maliciously) insinuated as only a Cover of Sheeps Cloathing upon the Wolves Nature; and our most Solemn Declaration of our Belief in several Religious Points (being undeniable Truths,) construed, and suggested by some Men as only a fair Cover wherewith we guild over our Poyson, that it may pass the less suspected, & be the more glibly swallowed. What think you, is not this the heighth of Prejudice, and Envy in the abstract? Would they themselves be content to be thus interpreted? We have no intent to decoy and trapan People, that we should walk under a Disguise; which Intreagues usually have interest at one end of them, which can't be our case, who neither give nor take Money for Preaching? so that the increase of our Numbers, won't fill our Coffers. We have no other Interest to promote, but the

the Advancement of true Piety and Christianity: And having Love and Good-will to all People; more especially to those whose Minds are awakened, and Hearts warmed, having true fervent Desires, and living Breathings towards God, thirsting after a nearer and more satisfactory knowledge of, and acquaintance with him, than *barely* a profession and hearsay of him; and therefore what we have found advantagious, assistant and satisfactory to us, in our unwearied pursuit after Peace with him, that we recommend to others. We call People home to the Gift of God in themselves, which only can do them good; that every one may know the good Shepherd and Bishop of Souls for themselves, and hear and know his Voice in them, from that of a Stranger; and learn of him, and follow him, who is pure, and ever leads to Purity and Holiness; that so his offering up of himself for them may be of benefit to them, and they experience the great Salvation of God. For impress this upon your Minds, and take it along with you;
That

That notwithstanding our Saviour hath paid a Ransom for us, and made an Atonement through the the precious Blood of his Croſs; yet if we experience not, the end of his Coming, and Death effected, and answered in our selves, it shall avail us nothing; except we know him a Saviour and Supporter near; except we know a Principle of Divine Light and Life, to illuminate our Minds, to revive and warm our languishing Hearts, to beget and increase true Love to God, and the living Faith that gives Victory, to convert us, and govern our Thoughts, to renew and regulate our Wills, and limit our Desires, and bridle our Tongues, to excite holy Inclinations, and keep up a due Heat in our Christianity, and strengthen our Minds in that which is good and well pleasing to God; Except we know these things in and for our selves, all our outside shew of Religion is but vain, and our Profession of Christ shall profit us nothing; but we shall lye down in sorrow at last. For none are Christ's, but those that have his Spirit, and

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Rom. 8.
9, 14.

are influenced by it; nor are any Children of God, but those that are led by the *Spirit of God*; which begets in the Mind a detestation of Sin and Evil, and a love to Purity, Goodness and Vertue. Wherefore, laying aside all Strife and Animosities, all Envy-
 Rom. 12.
9. ing and Evil-speaking, let us abhor that which is Evil, and cleave to that which is Good, and address our selves with a due and humble Application to the accomplishment of that most concerning and important Affair of our Lives, the working out our Salvation. And let every one follow the Lord faithfully, according to what is made known to them; knowing that we shall be judged according to our Knowledge, and that 'twill be happy for those whose Wills and Performances correspond with their Understandings, in that Day when all must stand before the Judgment-seat of Christ, and give an account of their Deeds done in the Body, and receive a sentence thereafter; either, *Come ye blessed, or Depart from me ye workers of Iniquity.* It won't be then of what Congregation

tion or Confession of Faith, or of what Perswasion amongst the many wast thou? Among all which there will then be but Two sorts, the Sheep and the Goats; those that heard the Shepherd's Voice, and followed him, who were guided and governed by the good Spirit of God in their Hearts; and those who wrapping their Talent in a Napkin, stifled Convictions, and neglecting the Day of their Visitation, continued under the dark Power of the Evil One. One may go a great way, and make a fair shew of Religion and Piety, and yet be turned to the left Hand; 'tis not having our Heads filled with curious sublime Notions, though of never so fine and elevated a Speculation; let's trim and garnish our Lamps never so finely, 'twill not administer an entrance without the Heavenly Oil, without that Holy Divine Unction fills our Hearts, enlightens our Minds, and inflames our Affections to a due Watchfulness and Obedience to its Teachings; which are the most assured Marks of our being really in Christ, in whom only our acceptance is. H 2 That

That you with us, and we with you, may so circumspectly live up to our Light and Knowledge given by Christ, as that our Consciences may not condemn us; but that, having finished our Days here with comfort, we may lay down our Heads in Peace, with a well-grounded Hope of a joyful Resurrection, and have Boldness in the Day of Judgment; is our Hearty Desire.

For howsoever People may have been posselt with the contrary, by those who probably have left nothing unattempted, which their invention could supply, to fix an Odium, and scare People from us, we believe the Resurrection as delivered to us in the Holy Scriptures; and our Adversaries can't reasonably pretend to know more; in which we willingly acquiesce; content that Faith supply the defect of Demonstration; esteeming it consentaneous to Reason, to forbear even the most abstracted reasoning about that which is above Reason. We doubt not in the least either the reality or excellency of it; but our great care, and
 necessary

necessary concern is, that if by any means we may attain to the Resurrection of the Just; and then 'tis sufficient that when our Lord appears we shall be like him: Which hope ^{1 Joh. 3: 2, 3.} and expectation ought to excite in all, most fervent Desires, and vigorous Pursuits after Purity and Holiness.

If what we have Written for your Information, may find some place with those, who being impartial, and inquiring, have room to receive it, and that it contributes to their Benefit and Satisfaction, we have our End: But for those who are full, or are Critical, and ready to Carp at every Word or Sentence that is not plac'd to their Mind, if not also pre-judge it, as 'tis not intended for them; so we don't suppose 'twill prove to their good Liking, nor meet with a Reception amongst them. For we don't propose to reconcile our whole Belief and Perswasion in Religious Matters to that of our Opposers; who notwithstanding, what we have writ,

we expect will yet accuse us of Error. However, having thus far declar'd our selves in the most necessary Points of the Christian Religion, we don't think our selves farther obliged to answer the Cavils and Criticisms of such who may appear Contentious and will never want something to object against those that come not up in all things exactly to their Level. Whom yet we advise, rather to be quiet, and study to know and govern themselves, according to that Religion that is pure and Undeiled before God, and leads to Visit and Assist the Fatherless and Widows in their Affliction, and to keep themselves from the Spots and Defilements of this World. Were this (as it ought) our Principal Care and Concern in our Conduct, we should have little mind or leisure to differ about Matters of less moment: And while we seem zealously to contend about Religion, frustrate its end. We should not be taken up in disputing what that Principle is, which God hath plac'd in us to do us good, and

and in the mean time neglect its Assistance, and obstruct its Operation upon the Mind; but be given up to be leavened and changed by it that we may partake of the Blessings thereof; and with it build on the Foundation God hath laid, that which may abide the fiery Tryal. To which we recommend you, and remain your peaceable and loving Neighbours,

1 Cor. 3.
11, 12,
13, 14.

W.C. A.P. J.H. &c.

T H E E N D.